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VACA VALLEY RADIO CLUB

VACAVILLE, CALIFORNIA

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October 2010

President's Message

Hi All,

Autumn is upon us; the days are getting shorter and the leaves are stating to turn. It's the perfect time to inspect your outdoor antennas and RF feed lines before the weather turns nasty. Well, nasty as the weather can get in California anyway.

Longer evenings can mean more radio time in between football games. Maybe this is the perfect time to master CW or upgrade your license. Let's talk about it.

Hope to see you all at the next meeting on 13 October.

73!

Scott Joseph, KI6YYZ

2010 California QSO Party

By Jerry Olive KD6WKY

This year was a north year. You see in the even numbered years I get to pick the QTH for our county expedition radio station and on the odd years Ralph Jones KA6FDI picks the location. This year we set up operations at the Purtill Brothers' prune orchard just west of Winters, CA.

Winters, CA is in Yolo County which had been under represented in the contest for years. Many contesters from around the country had missed getting all 58 California counties because nobody was on the air in Yolo over the past few years. The site was close to Vacaville too which made it very convenient for me. Ralph had to drive 450 miles to get here.

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We set up Saturday morning and got on the air by 11:00am, the contest started at 9:00am. We have always decided to take our time, set up safely, set up securely, set up one time. We figure we'll be QRV until 3:00pm Sunday afternoon so what's a few hours among friends? Our goal was to get on the air and having fun, racking up points was secondary though we did that.

We set up the EZ-Up Tent about five or six rows in from the dirt road that separated the prunes from the walnuts. We had plenty of room since the prune trees were spaced 18' apart. Prune trees make great tie downs, way better than driving stakes in the ground and with prune trees in nice rows, we had trees never more than a few feet away.

Both Ralph and I backed out vehicles down the rows avoiding the drip irrigation lines. That was nice, we only had to reach over to our cars to get stuff.

Last winter I had my Kipor 1 kilowatt generator serviced with all new fuel lines. I had it ready to go and was pleasantly relieved when it started up after only a few pulls. She purred beautifully all weekend long. The generator was so quiet we had to look at it to see the green LED to know where it was after dark. As about 1/4 load, we ran the generator for over nine hours and didn't run out of gas. We refilled it just before dark to make it easier.

The two antennas we erected were an inverted vee dipole and a Buddipole. Both antennas performed great. Ralph ran with the dipole most of the time, I used the Buddipole most of the time. We switched about every 90 minutes or so. Since we were running a multi-single operation, we could only use one transmitter at a time.

Jerry Volpe KG6TT and Skip Lawson AF6HC helped us set up early in the day. Jerry "TT" went home to operate from his QTH while Skip stayed with us throughout Saturday into the evening. I noted Skip likes walnuts.

Mid-day it got a bit warm. I had remembered to bring my turbo-fan from the office so I plugged it in and turned it on. We had no breeze, only shade, so the fan really helped.

About dinner time I called my daughter Joanie and asked her to make a chow run for us. Remember, Vacaville is only 25 minutes away. She took our order, sent to El Pollo Loco and arrived at dusk in the prune orchard using GPS location I had programmed in her device in advance. By now we had each consumed about one gallon of water each.

After dinner we activated the light kits and prepared for evening operations by dimming the displays on the equipment and computer used for logging.

About that time we had visitors. Tom Purtill the owner and his friend Jaime Guzman KD6ASU arrived to check out our operation; they even brought their own chairs.

We spent a long time discussing radio theory with Tom helping his understand wave lengths, tuned antennas, and CW. In turn, Tom gave us a dose of horticulture theory as it applies to prunes, walnuts, and tomatoes. All in all I think it was a fare and good exchange of knowledge between friends on a bright moon filled October evening in a prune orchard west of Winters, CA.

We shut down when the QSO's dropped off about mid -night. Skip headed home with a promise to show up in the morning with breakfast. Ralph and I rigged our sleeping gear rather hastily and went to sleep. It was perfect cool calm October evening to sleep under the stars.

About 6:00am I got up and drove over to the Winters convenience store to get some coffee. I brought back three big cups of coffee. Ralph and I each drake one cup and we split the third cup. About the time we finished our coffee and had the radios running again, the cell phone rang with a familiar voice telling of his ETA with breakfast.

Skip showed up as the sun popped up above the trees with a monster breakfast still warm and very tasty. We consumed eggs, hash browns, bacon, a biscuit, and washed it down with lots of water to get the day started.

On the air we continued our mission of keeping Yolo on the air. We had several stations tell us we were the last county they needed for a clean sweep. We found that very gratifying to hear.

We ran right up to 3:00pm and ended the contest with no problems. Tear down took about an hour thanks to the help of Tom and Jaime who showed up to help us put everything away.

We completed 211 QSO's in 45 states and provinces. We were very satisfied with the whole operation and may go back there again in the future.

When we completed putting everything away, Tom invited us to load up on tomatoes. I brought home at least 30 lbs. of tomatoes, I'm sure Ralph and Skip did the same. It was a great ending to a great weekend on the air with good friends.

VACA VALLEY RADIO CLUB—2009
ELECTED OFFICERS

President: Scott Joseph, KI6YYZ
Vice President: Kim Ware, KI6JNX
Secretary: Jerry Olive, KD6WKY
Treasurer: Bob Hewitt, W6HEW

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Director: Skip Lawson, AF6HC
Director: Chris Jones, KD7TQO
Director: Antonio Del Rio, N6ZGB
Director: Glen Mitchell W6JLX

APPOINTED POSITIONS

Net Control Chairperson: Open
Activities Chairperson: Board of Directors
Newsletter Editor: Jerry Olive, KD6WKY
Newsletter Publisher & Distributor: Bob Hewitt, K6HEW

Merriment on Main

Mark your calendars and save the date, Tuesday, November 30 is Merriment on Main. The first planning meeting was conducted last Friday morning with most city agencies and volunteer groups in attendance.

The Vaca Valley Radio Club will again provide valuable communications support for this premier event which kicks off the Christmas season in Vacaville with a tree lighting ceremony.

This event is by far the most popular event the radio club is involved with. This will be the 19th year in a row that W6VVR has provided communications support for Merriment on Main.

Nominations for Club Officers

October is the nomination month for club officers. The vote takes place in November. Think about volunteering guys. We need lots of help to make this club work well. It doesn't happen all by itself. We will be soliciting nominations for the following offices: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Board of Directors.

Contesting Season is Here!

One of the activities some radio amateurs enjoy is radio contesting. Various on the air contest begin to fill up the weekends on the air about this time of year running through the Spring time.

If you're interested in learning more about radio contesting please contact Tom Lish, N6AJR or Jerry Olive KD6WKY, they can give you the run down on the fun and what it takes to jump in. Either one of these guys would love to have you over to pick up a microphone and get on the air.

Pacificon 2010 - the West Coast Ham Radio Convention is Coming Back!

After a one year hiatus, **PACIFICON 2010**, the great west coast ham radio convention, returns to the San Francisco Bay Area and will again be sponsored by the Mount Diablo Amateur Radio Club. **Pacificon 2010** will take place Friday, October 15th through Sunday, October 17th, at the San Ramon Marriott Hotel at 2600 Bishop Drive in San Ramon, California.

Tickets are $15 in advance if purchase on line or $20 at the door.

Parachute Mobile at PACIFICON

On October 16, 2010, ham skydivers Mark Meltzer, AF6IM, and Michael Gregg, KF6WRW, will be making multiple HAHO (high altitude high opening) parachute jumps to communicate with fellow hams attending PACIFICON. The ARRL Pacific Division Convention takes place in San Ramon, California October 15-17. The jumpers will carry APRS telemetry gear that will report their altitude, position, heart rate and blood oxygen level in plain text. Plans are also underway to transmit live ATV on 1.2 GHz from aloft.

All you need to get a Parachute Mobile contact is a radio on 146.46 MHz FM simplex and to be within about 100 miles of Byron, California on the afternoon of October 16. Special event QSL cards will be issued. Monitor the jumps on APRS.

The Parachute Mobile Project: "in the air, on the air" taking ham radio to new heights. *– Mark Meltzer, AF6IM*

PJ Pandemonium -- Opening October 10 on an HF Band Near You

Get ready -- new Caribbean DXCC entities are on the way!

By H. Ward Silver, N0AX

No, it's not a colorized re-release of a 1960s B-grade beach movie. On Sunday, October 10, five islands in the Caribbean are all changing their governmental status at the same time: Saba, St Eustatius, Bonaire, St Maarten and Curacao. Known collectively as the Netherlands Antilles, these islands have up to now been an autonomous part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Some will remain within the Netherlands as "special municipalities" and some will become independent nations within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, just as the island nation of Aruba did back in 1986. For more on the history of these islands, read the Wikipedia entry, Dissolution of the Netherlands Antilles.

What this means for the HF bands is a lot of interference as the new DXCC entities are born. As described in a recent ARRL Web story, two DXCC entities (the island pair of Bonaire & Curacao and the three-island group of St Maarten, Saba and St Eustatius) will be deleted from the DXCC list of active entities and be replaced by up to five new entities!

It is *extremely* unusual for this amount of geopolitical rearrangement to occur simultaneously, and as you might imagine, DXers around the world are getting ready to put those new entities in their logs on as many bands and modes as possible. At least eight stations are planning on being active, so the bands "might" be a little crowded for the first few days.

THE VVRC WELCOMES YOU

The Repeater is Published by the Vaca Valley Radio Club, PO Box 143, Elmira, CA 95625-0143, An ARRL Affiliated Club. Founded 1987, Chartered 1988 General Meetings: 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7:30 PM 420 Vine Street Fire Station.

Wheelchair accessible

Visit the Repeater online courtesy of Bob K6HEW at:
http://www.jcis.net/~hewbob/vvrc
Club repeater in Vacaville:W6VVR 145.470 MHz(-) pl 127.3

The W6VVR net call is Tuesday evenings at 7pm on the club repeater. All are invited to participate in this weekly meeting on the air. 73!

Additional local repeaters
WV6F 224.200(-) WV6F 440.025(+)
W6OMF Repeater 224.540 MHz, PL 118.8 Hz.

Just as when the Olympics come to town, the happiest residents will be those who plan ahead. If you're not planning on joining the throng chasing the infant entities, you should probably make up a "Plan B" for your schedule or net (actually, you should *always* have a Plan B, but that's a subject for another article).

DXing activity tends to take place low in the band segments for a particular mode, so moving higher in frequency is probably the best way to avoid the pileups. CW operators will have to dodge digital DXers at the high end of the usual CW haunts, but don't forget that CW can operate pretty much anywhere and there will surely be useable spectrum just below the phone segments or below the DXpedition transmit frequencies. And if QRM is upsetting, this might be a good time to work down the chore list or read that copy of *War and Peace*. Regardless of your preferences, planning ahead is definitely the way to go.

If you haven't tried DXing, the island stations will be loud and clear from almost anywhere in North America. After the initial pileups thin out a bit -- it will take a few days, realistically -- even very modest stations will be well-positioned to work that rarest of DX, a New One! You may find yourself enjoying the competition and there will surely be colorful QSLs to collect. Listen to the instructions of the DX operators and once you've got the hang of operating split and finding where the DX stations are listening, have at it! Caution -- DXing has been known to turn into a lifetime of fun!

Okay, you DXers -- just because there are New Ones afoot, that doesn't magically suspend the rules. Listen before you transmit and be sure to stay within your US allocations. For example, 21.195 MHz is outside the US phone band, no matter how loud the DX station may be! With so many chasing the DX, there will surely be frustrating moments of confusion -- keep calm and resist the urge to "help." You'll eventually get through!

Wow -- this is a once in a lifetime occurrence on the ham bands, so make it enjoyable by using some know-how and personality. You'll be able to recount the stories of October 10, 2010 for a long time.

Make them good ones!

First 2200 Meter VE-JA QSO Claimed

Scott Tilley, VE7TIL, provided this report to the ARRL.

Kunikazu Togashi, JA7NI, in Daisen, Akita, Japan, and Scott Tilley, VE7TIL, of Vancouver, British Columbia, completed a transpacific QSO on 2200 m (137 kHz) on September 28, a first between Canada and Japan. The distance between CN89dk (TIL) and QM09fl (NI) is 7162 km. While not the DX record for 2200 m, it comes in second to the distance achieved by ZM2E and UA0LE in 2004.

Things started off with a surprise as NI copied TIL's beacon signal 30 minutes before his sunset, something that had never happened during previous tests. What followed was a "quick" exchange of calls and NI's report was received by TIL. Then a very long and deep fade occurred. This happened before to us and we lost each other and an entire night's sleep!

But that taught us a lesson and we adapted to the deep fading on this path by creating new QSO procedures to deal with the long times it takes to send information and the deep QSB. NI waited patiently, not knowing TIL had copied the calls and his report.

Our procedure was for him to simply wait until he copied something and respond accordingly... Three hours later RO appeared on NI's screen and during one of my crawls out of the operator's bunk to check the waterfall I saw a dot during a pause in transmission and stopped the transmitter. A few minutes later there was an R and TU but not in DFCW but rather QRSS, as a malfunction at NI's end had him scrambling to send QRSS30 by hand, a true test of a CW operator's skill! He recovered with grace and the QSO was in the bag!

The mode used was dual frequency CW, a form of very slow frequency shift keying that offers a significant time advantage over standard slow Morse code (QRSS). DFCW is read directly off a computer display using software such ARGO by Alberto, I2PHD. The dot lengths used ranged from 30 to 60 seconds.

This QSO caps off months of work by both operators in improving their stations and beacon testing on the path to learn its characteristics.

What is clear to me is the transpacific path on 2200 m is a very viable communication path for amateur experimentation. I'm sure time will demonstrate this further as procedures and equipment improve on both sides of the ocean and the QSO count starts to rise and the time to complete drops.

Further information about the QSO and other LF tests by the operators can be viewed at http://www3.telus.net/sthed/argo/ and http://ja7ni.web.fc2.com/.

DXpedition to Sable Island, Canada

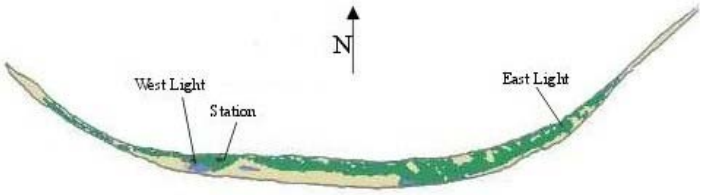
Sable Island is located approximately 300 km east-southeast of Halifax, Nova Scotia. It's approximately 45 kilometers long and 1 kilometer wide and composed entirely of sand.

The Meteorological Service of Canada, a branch of Environmental Canada, maintains a continuous presence on the island. There are also seasonally occupied facilities belonging to Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and Coast Guard and these include a number of buildings, two lighthouses, two helicopters landing pads and a navigation beacon.

Island access and activities are administered by the Canadian Coast Guard on behalf of the Government of Canada pursuant to the Sable Island Regulations of the Canada Shipping Act.

Sable Island is renowned for its wild horses and shipwrecks. It is also an island with a fascinating geology and natural history.

Few people have the chance to visit Sable Island because of its protected status. Those who have set foot on the fine white sand find themselves subtly changed forever.



The prefix is CYØ/ followed by the call sign and will be used in this DXpedition from October 21-29 on all modes and all bands.

For more information about this site, go to http://www.cy0dxpedition.com/ it is a very interesting location and not too far from here globally speaking of course.

To the right are two photos of Sable Island. Naturally these are wild horses on Sable Island. That's how it got it's name.

PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

VACA VALLEY RADIO CLUB, INC.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL FORM

Please Print & Fill in Completely

Dues are delinquent January 1st

Name: _____ Call Sign_____
Street: _____
City: _____Zip: _____
Phone: (_____) _____-_____OK to Publish ?(_____)
License Class: _____ ARRL Member ?(_____)
E-Mail Address_____

FAMILY Member (Spouse or Children)

Name: _____ Call Sign_____
License Class: _____ARRL Member ?(_____)
Name: _____ Call Sign_____
License Class: _____ARRL Member ?(_____)
Name: _____ Call Sign_____
License Class: _____ARRL Member ?(_____)

MEMBER Dues --------- $20.00_____
Each Family Member -- $ 2.00_____
Student ---------- $ 5.00_____
Repeater/Autopatch donation ---_____
Call/Name badge -------- $10.00_____
Optional ARRL membership
ARRL dues---------- $37.00_____
.
Total----------_____
Paid by CASH: ____ Check #_____
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